The Melville Society NEWSLETTER

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By unanimous vote of the Executive Committee, the Society this year establishes two types of membership. Active membership (at two dollars per year) includes the right to vote on Society business, all issues of the Newsletter, and other services of the Society, such as the annual Melville bibliography, offprints of articles (when obtainable), and the like. Associate membership (at one dollar per year) includes all issues of the Newsletter but no other services and is a non-voting membership.

Action upon this matter was taken as the result of discussions held at the annual meeting in Cambridge last December.

THE MELVILLE ROOM

Robert G. Newman of the Berkshire Athenaeum announces that the Herman Melville Memorial Room will be dedicated in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at five o'clock on the afternoon of April 24. Invitations will be sent to members of the Society and other interested persons. Luther S. Mansfield will represent the Society officially and will speak during the ceremonies.

Other speakers on the program are Mrs. Eleanor Melville Metcalf, Miss Agnes Morewood, Mrs. Lawrence Miller, and Henry A. Murray. Recent acquisitions of the Berkshire Athenaeum and its location within a short distance of Melville's former home, "Arrowhead," and other places of interest for the study of Melville make it an important center for Melville scholarship.

An informal tea will be tendered by the trustees of the Athenaeum.

OUR NEXT MEETING

President Merton Sealts reports that members of the Executive Committee have voted to hold our next annual meeting in Chicago in connection with the convention of the Modern Language Association during December. Suggestions for the program are invited.

It has been decided that the meeting should be somewhat shorter than that held in Cambridge. The hour will be one which is not in conflict with the luncheon of the American Literature Group. Some suggestions for the program which have already been received: (1) consideration of a single work of Melville, possibly *The Confidence-Man;* (2) the major literary influences on Melville; (3) Melville and some important contemporaries. Members may send further suggestions to the secretary or to Merton Sealts at Lawrence College (Appleton, Wis.).

MOTION PICTURES

The Warner Brothers of Hollywood have recently released an extremely interesting short film on whaling, entitled "Thar She Blows." In other motion pictures, particularly the travelogues, there is frequently information of interest to students of Melville. The secretary would be pleased to receive notice from any members who happen to see such films.

A number of years ago, purely by accident, the secretary attended the showing of a short motion picture, the subject of which was a voyage through the South Seas. There were several scenes in the Marquesas Islands, including one in which young native maidens were shown waiting along the seashore while a fishing party brought in its catch and then eating the fish alive and raw! Here was visual evidence of Melville's truthfulness in describing the habits of the Typee maidens.

Although notes were made at the time concerning the title, producer, and distributor of the picture, these have unfortunately been lost. Prolonged correspondence with several motion picture companies has failed to uncover any clues to this fascinating film. Does any member have information about it? If so, would he be kind enough to send such information along to the secretary?

NOTES

Plans are now being made to prepare copies of the papers presented at our Cambridge meeting for distribution to all active members of the Society. Barring any unforeseen difficulties, these will be run on the mimeograph and mailed with the next issue of the Newsletter.

By paying off the small balance remaining on its account with the Harvard

University Library, the Society has now cleared itself of all indebtedness and is operating in the black.

The manuscript of the *Moby-Dick Centennial Essays*, which includes papers presented at the major centennial celebrations in various parts of the nation during the autumn and winter of 1951, is now ready for the publisher. By March 27 it will be in the hands of Allen Maxwell, director of the Southern Methodist University Press, for a final decision regarding its publication.

A British scholar, Ronald Mason, is now preparing a doctoral study of Melville's poetry. Members are already familiar with his recent book on Melville, *The Spirit Above the Dust*. For those wishing to correspond with him, his address is Woodman's Cottage, Park Road, Banstead, Surrey, England.

"Captain Ahab," a three-act play by Tyrus Hillway based on *Moby-Dick*, will be presented in August at the Barn Stages Theater in Nantucket. Plans for its presentation on Broadway are still tentative. Mr. Hillway is now working on a dramatization of Melville's *Pierre*.

George R. Creeger has completed his dissertation (at Yale) on "Color Symbolism in the Works of Herman Melville, 1846-1852."

On March 22, the regular Sunday afternoon broadcast program of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra included a performance of Ghedini's "Concerto dell' Albatro, da *Moby-Dick*."

C. L. R. James, British (West Indian) author and lecturer, has just published *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways*, which may be described as in one sense a politico-economic interpretation of *Moby-Dick*. Two chapters in the book discuss the author's experiences on Ellis Island while resisting deportation under the McCarran Act. Copies may be secured at one dollar each from Mr. James at 1186 Broadway, New York 1, N.Y.

Melville's "Bartleby" is reprinted in *American Short Stories, 1820 to the Present*, edited by Eugene Current-Garcia and Walton R. Patrick (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1952).

Howard P. Vincent recently participated in a panel discussion on the television show sponsored by the *Encyclopedia Britannica* called "What's the Great Idea?" He discussed the quotation from Father Mapple's sermon which begins "And it is in obeying God . . . " etc. In an earlier television appearance, he talked about old-time whaling.

A paper on "The Gams in *Moby-Dick*," was read by Bruce Ingham Granger at the annual meeting of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association in Fort Collins, Colorado, on October 11, 1952.

Benjamin Britten's opera, *Billy Budd*, had its American premiere on television (NBC-TV) on Sunday, October 19, 1952. Andrew McKinley sang the role of Captain Vere; Theodor Uppman was Billy; and Leon Lishner played Claggart. Several parts were cut in this production.

Was Melville a "negative romanticist?" See Morse Peckham, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism," *PMLA*, LXVI, 5-23 (March, 1951).

While teaching last summer in Bonn, Germany, Ernest E. Leisy assembled 16 pages of bibliographical notes on Melville's reputation in Germany.

Boosey and Hawkes (30 West 57th St., New York City 19) publishes *Billy Budd*, Benjamin Britten's four-act opera for male cast and chorus (printed in England, 1952) at $15. The libretto may be secured separately for $1. The first full-length American performance of the opera took place at the Indiana University School of Music on December 7, 1952.

Membership dues for 1953 are now payable. Send two dollars if you wish to be an active member (with the right to vote, the Newsletter, and all services) and one dollar if you wish to be an associate member (Newsletter only).

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE Melville Society, a group of literary scholars and others interested in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to encourage literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Executive committee: Merton M. Sealts (1954), president; Eleanor Melville Metcalf (1953); William H. Gilman (1955); Walter E. Bezanson (1956); Harrison Hayford (1957). Membership is two dollars per year and includes all services of the Society. Associate membership (non-voting) is one dollar per year and includes all issues of the Newsletter. Address Tyrus Hillway, secretary, at Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.